



The Virginia Saltwater Review

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by

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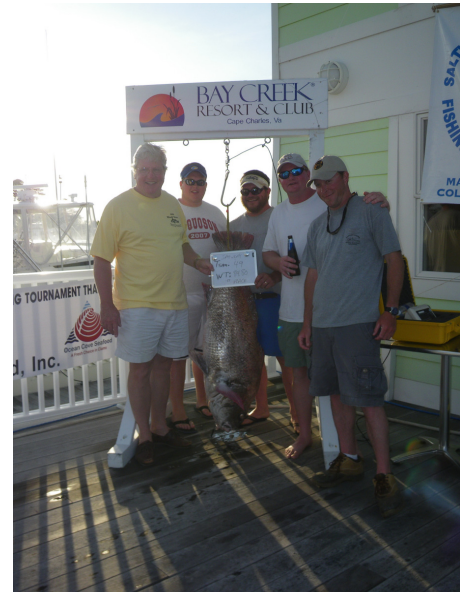


OVERVIEW



Happy Memorial Day! The weather is supposed to be perfect, so everyone is geared up for a really great Memorial Day weekend. Scattered flounder are still being found in the bay, while some of the seaside Eastern Shore areas are still seeing some pretty hot flounder action. Speckled trout have arrived to Mobjack Bay, and striped bass are showing up everywhere! Our usual summertime friends—croaker, spot, and sea mullet—have also arrived and are biting for anglers at the local piers.

While the drum fishing has slowed somewhat this week, we had a great turnout for the Black Drum World Championship Tournament last weekend in Cape Charles. On the first day of the tournament, a citation black drum (and eventual first place fish) was landed, weighing in at an impressive 84.8 pounds. Due to the small craft advisories that were posted Saturday afternoon, and predicted to stretch into Monday, the second day of the tournament was cancelled due to safety, and the winner announced Saturday night (see page 6 for more details).



Only one week to go, and our newest fishing hotspot, the Buckroe Fishing Pier, will open on May 30th! Look for VMRC staff to be on hand during the opening ceremonies with the Marine Sportfish Collection Project and Virginia Fishing Line Recycling Program!

Please note, the SWR will not be published next week. The next edition of the Virginia Saltwater Review will be published June 5, 2009.

THE FISHING REPORT

Chincoteague

Good weather in Chincoteague has kept the great fishing going, according to Donna at Captain Bob's Marina. Flounder are still being found all over, but fishing in the deeper water (15 to 20 feet) is the way to really find them. The Chincoteague Channel has been productive from Captain Bob's all the way to the draw bridges. The east side of Black Narrows Marsh, the area in front of Daisy's Dockside, the Four Mouths area, and Cockle creek have all been hot spots. The top bait continues to be gulp, with minnows, silversides, and smelt working as well. Bluefish mixed with trout were also found in Cockle Creek this week, and striped bass have been spotted in a few of the creeks. The beaches have been hot with drum (both red and black) and striped bass.

Onancock

According to Captain Wil, croaker are looking pretty good in Onancock. These fish are not thin like last year, and the catches are mostly 10- to 12-inch fish with a few up to 15 or 16 inches. Most are closer to shore, probably because the water is warmer in those areas. Flounder fishing has also been very strong. There haven't been many reports of red drum, but they should be around. Speckled trout have been found along the shoreline around Onancock, to the north and south. The best bite for these fish is after dark. There is a lot of grass behind the islands, which is a good sign for fishing. Crabs are starting to come up into the creek. Captain Wil expects Memorial Day weekend to be very good for fishing.

Wachapreague

Wonderful fishing was reported from the Wachapreague Marina this week. Anglers are catching flounder (1 in 15 to 20 are keepers) and the occasional black drum. On the beaches, there has been a really good run of striped bass from the surf.

Cape Charles

According Mark at Chris' Bait and Tackle, black and red drum fishing has slowed down, but hopefully it will start picking up as the weather improves. The Kiptopeke Pier has been productive lately with croaker catches, sand mullet, and two 21-inch flounder. While a few have been scattered in the bay, most of the flounder catches have been near Oyster.

At Cherrystone Bait and Tackle, black drum have been reported in the lower bay. Though the fishing has been weak, croaker and trout have been caught as well.

Lower Bay/Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel

At Sunset Boating Center, a 37-inch striped bass was landed from the Hampton River on Wednesday. Striped bass are also coming from the 4th island of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Grouper continue to show up at the Hampton Bar and around the bay.

Black drum catches were reported from Salt Ponds Marina last week.

At the York River Fishing Center, there were no citations this week, but fishing is picking up in the area. Croaker are biting well at the pier at Gloucester Point. Flounder can be found around the Coleman Bridge and the mouth of the York River. In Mobjack Bay, speckled trout are biting.

Ken Neill, reporting secretary for the Peninsula Anglers Club, contributed the following:

Big black and red drum continue to be the main target at the mouth of the bay. Black drum are being caught near buoys 16 and 13. Red drum are being caught along the seaside of Fisherman's and Smith islands and up on 9-Foot-Shoal. Both blacks and reds are being caught near buoy 10. Flounder fishing has been hit and miss. The majority being caught are too short to keep. The abundance of rain has not helped the flounder bite, but as the weather patterns settle and the waters clear, flounder catches will improve. Fishing for croaker has been very good up in the rivers. Mobjack Bay is producing some nice catches of large speckled trout. A few large sheepshead have been caught. There have been some sightings of spadefish at the Chesapeake Light Tower. There should be some catch reports soon. Cobia are being caught in great numbers out of the Outer Banks. There are probably some in the Chesapeake Bay now. We will have anglers looking for them over the next couple of weeks. Offshore action has gotten better. Good catches of yellowfin tuna, dolphin, and some large wahoo are being caught out of the Outer Banks. Some warmer water has moved in close enough for boats out of Virginia to get in on this action when the wind has allowed them to get out there.

Dr. Julie Ball, IGFA International Representative for Virginia Beach, contributed the following:

The predicted decent weather paired with cooperative fish could make this Memorial Day weekend a great lead-in for the summer fishing season. The chance at a red or black drum bite continues to draw anglers to the Eastern Shore side of the bay. After a brief lull in the black drum action this week, Mark at Chris' Bait and Tackle reports that a few boats are now starting to catch multiple fish again. Most catches are coming from near Buoys 10, 13 and 16, where sea clams and chowder clams are working well.

Red drum action is not anywhere near the level it was for the past two years. Smith Island Inlet is producing a hand full of red drum for boaters in anywhere from 6 to 10 feet of water, with peelers and blue crabs working the best. Puppy drum (juvenile red drum), on the other hand, are out in force in bay and coastal inlets, with Lynnhaven getting the nod this week. One boat fishing Lynnhaven Inlet lost count after releasing over 20 pups this week. Mary at the Virginia Beach Fishing Center reports that anglers are catching a few puppy drum and striped bass in Rudee Inlet, as well as bluefish weighing up to 8 pounds from the jetties. Nice chopper bluefish are also invading the lower bay and inlets.

The next big news is the arrival of the first summer species. The graceful spadefish took residence in local waters this week, with a six-pounder caught at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel this week. Expect these popular fish to turn on soon. Look for big spades to show on the Cell soon, where the largest fish of the year are routinely landed. Sheepshead are next. Cobia are going strong in Carolina right now, so we should see our first local cobia catches soon.

The lower bay rivers are still holding croaker, as well as the Little Creek jetties, where hardheads up to almost two pounds are hitting squid and Fishbites. The folks at the Ocean View Fishing Pier report that "all the croaker you want" prefer bloodworms lately, along with a mix of nice roundhead. Surf and pier anglers along the ocean front are hooking croaker, spot, roundhead, and bluefish. The bluefish are hitting

top water plugs, with Gotcha plugs working best.

Flatfish are still not at the top of the list this week. Anglers who work for them are weeding through dozens of undersized fish to find a few keepers, with Willoughby and Oyster providing the best numbers of keepers. Expect the flatfish action to improve once the water clears. Striped bass were making up for the slow flounder bite, but folks are finding sluggish rockfish action right now. The 3rd and 4th islands of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel were producing the best striper catches earlier in the week, where top water plugs were working well.

With the nice weather on the horizon for the weekend, some boats will venture offshore in search of tilefish, grouper, and sea bass. The sea bass will not disappoint, with good hauls of jumbo fish coming from inshore and offshore wrecks.

Bluewater anglers are watching the water to the East. Folks making the run to Carolina are finding yellowfin tuna, dolphin, and some Mako sharks.

Virginia Middle Bay

The fishing in this area of the bay has slowed down some due to the recent cold snap. Striped bass continue to be the headline for people plying these waters, but they have had to put forth more of an effort to find them. Good spots to check out will be the jetties and structure where there is a good amount of current. Croaker are still in the area, but as the water warms up they should start moving out of the shallow water to some of the deeper water holes and channels.

Jerry Thrash, of Queen's Creek Outfitters, reported the following:

The Mobjack Bay continued to produce trophy speckled trout this week. Three citations were recorded this week. Mirrolures were the lure of choice. Peelers are also producing, and fishing has been going particularly well in the evening. Striped bass and bluefish are mixed in with the trout catches. This week the Hole-in-the-Wall at Gwynn Island and the Piankatank River should start producing specks.

We registered two unusual catches for this early in the season. Mike Hurst of Gloucester and Wendell Sparrer of Seaford registered two citation sheepshead, which they caught from the Dominion Power Plant pier on peelers. These appear to be the first citation sheepshead caught in the state this year.

Flounder fishing continues to be unreliable. Hopefully we will see fish settle into their normal haunts as waters warm.

Croaker are in the rivers and in the creeks. They are biting bloodworms, squid and peelers. If fishing from shore or pier, evening and early morning fishing in 2 to 5 feet of water catches the fish as they prowl the shoreline. Some small to medium spot are also being caught, but not in great numbers yet.

Virginia Beach

In the inlet, anglers are doing really well with bluefish up to 33 inches right off the rocks, according to staff at the Virginia Beach Fishing Center. They are also seeing puppy drum (juvenile red drum) and

speckled trout in the area. Inshore, black and red drum are biting. Offshore, boats have just begun to see yellowfin tuna (about 30 pounds) and dolphin. Bluefin tuna are also around. In the Chesapeake Bay, flounder have been caught, and staff expects to hear reports of spadefish catches soon.

Virginia Piers

Croaker, flounder, and sea mullet were found at the Ocean View Pier this week.

At the Lynnhaven Pier, bluefish up to 15 pounds have been landed. Anglers are also catching sea mullet, croaker, puppy drum, and blue crabs.

At the Virginia Beach Pier, puppy drum, spot, croaker, and sea mullet were landed this week.

Outer Banks, NC

Offshore fishing continues to shine this week with a strong showing of tuna, dolphin, and amberjack. The wahoo fishing continues to sport good numbers as well, but you'll have to work harder for them. Billfishing is still on the upswing with sailfish holding the headlines for now. Closer to shore, the king mackerel bite is slow. Nearshore, speckled trout still continue biting along with 10-pound bluefish for the trollers. People fishing from shore and the piers have seen good runs of croaker, sea mullet, and spot. Inside the sounds, large sheepshead have been turning a lot of heads with sizes ranging up to 12 pounds.

South of Oregon Inlet, the wind continues to be a hindrance to those working the surf. A large red drum was caught at Ramp 43, along with sheepshead at the jetties, sea mullet at Ramp 49, and bluefish at Ramp 55.

Offshore fishing out of Hatteras Inlet has been non-existent due to the wind. When the wind does slack off, fishing for tuna, dolphin, and wahoo should be good. Inside the inlet, the bluefish and flounder bites have been on and off.

If you have additional information or would like further details contact Joe Grist at (757) 247-2237.

Please credit the Virginia Marine Resources Commission's THE SALTWATER REVIEW as the source of the fishing information.

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Eastern Shore of Virginia Chamber of Commerce

For Immediate Release
May 18, 2009

Cape Charles, VA – An 84.8-pound citation black drum landed by Hampton Capt. Bill Brown took top honors in the 2009 Black Drum World Championship Fishing Tournament held May 15 and 16, out of Bay Creek Marina in Cape Charles, Va. Rounding out the winning Team Eleanor Susan were Will Brown of Cape Charles, Darden Barrett of Hampton, J.P. Hubbard of Eastville, and Richard Hubbard of Machipongo.

Team Eleanor Susan earned \$3,000 for their efforts. The winning angler also will receive an engraved wall plaque featuring a miniature hand-painted black drum mount. In addition, the angler, team name, and fish weight will be engraved on the tournament's perpetual trophy, a black drum sculpture prepared by Turner Sculpture of Melfa.

Alexandria's Matt Parks claimed second place with his 71.22-pounder. Parks was fishing with Capt. Wayne Galbraith of Montpelier and John Galbraith of Arlington. Team Galbraith walked away with \$2,000 for their work. Parks will receive an individual custom plaque.

The third-place fish, worth \$1,000 and a plaque, was captured by Capt. Christian Seay of Cape Charles. His black drum weighed in at 68.45 pounds. Fishing with Seay aboard Team Big Blue was Rick Seay of Virginia Beach.

The crew aboard the Eleanor Susan also took first place in the Conservation Division with six tagged black drum. Participants in this division were registered members of the Virginia Gamefish Tagging Program or participated in a black drum tagging seminar prior to the captains meeting Friday night. The team will earn a boat plaque for its efforts.

The 2009 Black Drum World Championship attracted a field of 53 vessels with 243 anglers. Anglers hailed from Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina, West Virginia, Delaware, Georgia, and Tennessee. Fishing was originally scheduled for both Saturday and Sunday, but the tournament committee on Saturday evening called off Sunday fishing. Small craft warnings were posted Saturday beginning at 1 p.m. through Monday. The marine forecast was for showers and scattered thunderstorms throughout Saturday evening and into Sunday afternoon with winds at 15 to 25 knots gusting to 30 knots later in the day Sunday. Seas were forecast at 3 to 4 feet becoming 4 to 5 feet as the wind picked up.

Fish entered in the tournament were subject to examination by the Virginia Marine Resources Commission's Fisheries Management Division, which obtained biological samples for use in its Black Drum Data Collection Program. Anglers contributing to this program were awarded hats or shirts for their participation. The VMRC examined and collected samples from 31 fish during the tournament.

Another benefactor from the tournament was the Foodbank on the Eastern Shore, which received five donated drum; the fish will be distributed to families in need on the Eastern Shore of Virginia.

Generous sponsors contributed to the tournament's third year. Chesapeake sponsors included Chris' Bait & Tackle, Gowen & Associates, O'Connor & Co. Inc., and J.H. West Seafood, Inc. Our Kings Creek sponsors included Bay Propeller, Cape Charles Yacht Center/Southport Investors, Davis Disposal/Ashby Construction, Eastern Shore News, Eastern Shore Outfitters and Mid Atlantic Marine Group. Shore Ice, Inc., sponsored the posters.









ATTENTION VIRGINIA SALTWATER ANGLERS!!!

THE VIRGINIA MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION

***WANTS YOUR FISH....
TO MEASURE AND AGE.***

*You catch it, you fillet it,
but instead of throwing the remains in the trash,
please donate them to science.*

The Marine Sportfish Collection Project will focus on species of fish that are difficult to collect through the agency's normal sampling program. Anglers are asked to donate their filleted carcasses (head and tail intact) of legal and fresh-caught:

COBIA	SHEEPSHEAD	RED DRUM	BLACK DRUM
			
TAUTOG	KING MACKEREL	SPANISH MACKEREL	BLUEFISH (GREATER THAN 16 POUNDS OR 36 INCHES)
			

**In return for participating in the project, the agency will provide a
ONE FREE PROJECT TEE SHIRT or HAT, FOR EACH PARTICIPANT,
PER MONTH of the DONATION.**

Please visit these bait and tackle merchants to participate:

**Chris' Bait and Tackle (Capeville)
Long Bay Pointe Marina (Virginia Beach)
Wallace's Bait and Tackle (Hampton)**

***Coming May 30th to the
Buckroe Fishing Pier (Hampton)***

As of 01/15/2009



ATTENTION VIRGINIA SALTWATER ANGLERS!!!

Get Hooked! Report at www.vasaltwaterjournal.com

The Virginia Marine Resources Commission wants to know about the saltwater fish you caught and if you threw it back or took it home for dinner. How big was it? What species was it? Where did you catch it? This self-reported catch-and-release information will be posted on-line, giving the recreational angler a broader picture of what everyone else is catching -- and where.



The Fisherman's Journal is a tool intended to benefit the individual angler, the fishing community, and fishery managers. It allows individual anglers to keep an easy-to-retrieve record of their successful fishing experiences. It allows the fishing community to share and learn about other anglers' experiences. Finally, it benefits fishery managers by allowing them to assess fish populations by analyzing data provided by you, the recreational fisherman.

You will be able to report catch-and-release ranges, in addition to individual fish kept or released.

On those days that you catch-and-release 50 bluefish, you can just report the number caught and a range of lengths. Reporting individual measurements on more highly prized species -- such as Red Drum, Striped Bass and Flounder -- provides a greater benefit for everyone.

Anglers also may report their fishing trip information, including general location, time of day, weather and water conditions and type of gear and bait used. This information could be extremely valuable to other anglers to give them an idea of what is caught, where it is caught, and what bait is working on what species.

This self-reporting program will help anglers to become more successful and will provide fishery managers with important anecdotal information on recreational catches. The voluntary on-line reporting system is called the "Saltwater Fisherman's Journal," and is found at www.vasaltwaterjournal.com.

A screenshot of the Virginia Marine Resources Commission's "Recreational Fishing Online Reporting" website. The page has a blue header with the commission's name and logo. Below the header, there's a section for "Recreational Saltwater Fishing" with a welcome message. A prominent message states "Red Drum Reports are Needed!" and explains that they are collecting length data for a stock assessment. Another section titled "New 2008 Tautog Regs" lists fishing regulations: Closed Season (May 1 through June 24), Minimum Size Limit (14 inches), and Possession Limit (4 per person). A statistics box shows data as of June 16, 2008: 1,457 Members, 295 Trips, and 3,941 Catches. At the bottom, there are links for "Related Links" and "Help".

VMRC introduces the Virginia Fishing Line Recycling Program!

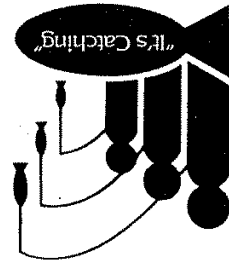
Launched in February, 2009, in conjunction with the Virginia Secretary of Natural Resources and the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, the VMRC has placed collection bins for monofilament fishing line across the state. Please help keep our waterways cleaner and safer for fish, birds, marine mammals, and boaters by depositing any used or tangled monofilament fishing line into specially marked containers (see photo). Several of our Saltwater Review partners have placed bins at their locations including Captain Bob's Marina, Chris' Bait and Tackle, the Ocean View Fishing Pier, and Jett's Hardware. If you have any questions about the program, or suggestions for new bin locations, please contact Alicia Nelson at (757) 247-2244 or alicia.nelson@mrc.virginia.gov.



**Coming Soon to the Buckroe Fishing Pier! See you at the
May 30th Grand Opening!!**

FIRST CLASS MAIL

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Practice

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REDUCE STRESS FACTORS THAT KILL FISH

Exhaustion * Loss of Slime * Wounds * Time out of Water